



# Child Support Services Can Help

*Facts about how Child Support Services  
can help your family*

Idaho Department of Health & Welfare

December 2000

## About Child Support Services

Love and support from both parents helps children grow up healthy and happy. This is true, even if they do not live together.

Chances are that Child Support Services can help your family if:

- You are a parent or guardian of a child younger than 18, and
- You do not live with the other parent.

## How to apply for services

You may request an application by calling Child Support Customer Service at (208) 334-2479, or if you are not in the Boise area, call 1-800-356-9868. The application also is available on the Internet at [www.idahochild.org](http://www.idahochild.org). To apply for services, complete the application, enclose the \$25 application fee, and mail it to the regional office nearest you.

## Child Support Services benefits families

- **Locating parents.** If you have lost contact with the other parent, Child Support Services may be able to help. To ensure children are supported by both parents, Child Support Services may access resources which may provide information about where the other parent lives or works. If the other parent agrees, we can share information with you.

- **Establishing legal relationships between children and parents.** If a mother and father are not married to each other when their child is born, a legal bond must be established between the child and father. This legal bond, called paternity, is necessary to establish a child support obligation and benefits children in many other ways. If your child's paternity has not been established yet, we can help you through the process. If you are not sure who is the father, we can also help arrange genetic testing to find out.

- **Establishing child support obligations.** If you do not have a child support order, we can help with the legal process to establish one. Child support obligations are based on the Idaho Supreme Court Guidelines. These guidelines take into account each parent's income and how many children they support. There are some fees for legal services, but these services generally are provided at far less expense than hiring a private attorney.

- **Ensuring financial obligations are met.** Once a child support order exists, Child Support Services can help ensure it is followed. Several "tools" are available — including income withholding, credit reporting, tax refund offset, license suspension, garnishment, and placing a lien on property. We also can work with parents who have trouble meeting child support obligations, including finding ways to improve job skills and earning power.

■ **Ensuring medical support is provided.**

Providing medical insurance coverage is another part of raising children. Child Support Services can enroll children on a parent's medical insurance policy if the parent has been ordered to provide medical coverage

■ **Modifying (changing) child support orders.** Sometimes, families' situations change so much that their child support order needs to be changed. Anytime after your child support order is three years old, you can ask us to review your order to see if it should be modified to better reflect your family's current situation. If so, we can help you through the process.

■ **Maintaining a record of payments that is recognized by courts.** All child support payments must be paid through Child Support Services. We record each payment, then send it electronically to the parent who has custody of the child. This process benefits both parents, since the courts recognize our record of payments. This payment record can prevent confusion and conflict later on.

### Are there any special fees?

There is a \$25 fee to process an application and open a case. Additional fees are charged if legal action is needed or if fees are charged to us for enforcement actions. To help make paying these fees a little easier for parents, these fees (other than the application fee) are usually subtracted from child support payments before they are sent to parents. A list of fees is included in the application packet.

### What if the other parent lives in another state?

If the other parent lives in another state, we can work with that state's child support agency, since they are more familiar with the laws and resources in that state. The other state may charge some fees for their services. If they do, the fees will be taken out of child support payments before they are sent to you.

### Child Support Customer Service

We understand that child support is important to your family. Please contact Customer Service to ask any questions you may have, or to provide any new information. The automated voice response system is available 24 hours a day, and can:

- Explain general information about Child Support Services;
- Provide some specific information about your case, such as if you have received a payment; and
- Allow you to leave a message for your case manager.

If you would like to speak to a customer service representative during business hours, you may press "0" at any time during your call.

You may reach Child Support Customer Services by calling 1-800-356-9868. If you are calling from the Boise area, please call 334-2479.

You are welcome to visit our web site at [www.idahochild.org](http://www.idahochild.org).



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